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ABSTRACT

Improving the inferior image that marketing education has developed can only be accomplished through the professionalism and dedication of each marketing education teacher and through efforts of marketing officials to upgrade program quality at every level. Eight suggestions are offered to stimulate ideas: (1) get students involved in fund-raising activities and community organizations such as the local public television station during its fund-raising campaigns; (2) update offerings at the secondary and postsecondary levels to keep pace with technology and advanced business procedures; (3) update skills during summer internships or temporary employment; (4) solicit the business community for monetary and equipment contributions to the program; (5) develop pamphlets, posters, or brochures to promote the class or program; (6) build a network, subscribe to publications, and attend conferences; (7) establish an advisory board and student organizations; and (8) solicit guest speakers. As the image of the marketing education program improves, the message will circulate around the school that it is a worthwhile program to be in. (AMH)

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IMAGE IMPROVEMENT IDEAS FOR MARKETING EDUCATION

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IMAGE IMPROVEMENT IDEAS FOR MARKETING EDUCATION

Marketing education "includes various combinations of subject matter and learning experiences related to the performance of activities that direct the flow of goods and services, including their appropriate utilization, from the producer to the consumer or user. These activities include selling, and such sales-supporting functions as buying, transporting, storing, promoting, financing, marketing research and management" (Mason 1972).

As like many of the other areas in vocational education, the image of marketing education at the local, state, and national levels has become tarnished. The survival of any field of study centers around the ability of that field to attract students. Most students attending a marketing education curriculum should be attracted to marketing education by the reputation of the teacher and the program that the teacher has created.

"What do you look like? Something like the cat dragged in? Or like a professional who dresses just a cut above accepted practice in your trade or profession. . . . What does the classroom (laboratory, shop) look like? It should be businesslike, professional and yes, exciting. . . . Is the equipment, if not 'state of the art,' at least relatively modern and still in common use in the industry? Is it in good repair? . . . Is the content of your program approximately up-to-date? Is it stimulating, challenging and appealing to young people? . . . Do you make a practice of collecting names and addresses of prospective students? . . . Do you invite guidance counselors and high school principals to visit your class? . . . Do you send a letter to the parents? - outlining the benefits their children will receive from . . . your program, . . . including how . . . the program . . . will enhance the child's education" (Brodhead 1988).

"Bored or ill-prepared faculty or an apathetic administration can quickly lower program quality, which contributes to an inferior image" (O'Connor and Trussell 1987). Improving the inferior image that marketing education has developed can only be accomplished through the professionalism and dedication of each marketing education teacher and through an "all out effort" by marketing education officials towards upgrading program quality at every level.

The suggestions listed below are offered in the hope of providing some specific ideas about improving the image of marketing education.

1. "The image of business" . . . and marketing "education is greatly improved by projects that reach out from the classroom and touch the community" (Nemesh and Nemesh 1987). Get your students involved in community fund raising activities or community enhancement, or promotion projects. Such activities could include: visiting a nursing home and providing leisure time activities for the residents of the nursing home. Another community promotion activity could include, involving your students in a clothing or food raising drive. Another suggestion is to involve your students with community organizations such as your local public television station. Sign up your class to answer the telephones during the station's fund raising periods or if the station has an annual television auction have your class participate in the many activities which are centered around the auction.

   I suggest contacting local community organizations to determine how your class can become involved with these types of organizations.

   Be sure to promote whatever community activities your class is involved in.

2. Curriculum update - "The impact of technological advances, modification of business procedures, complexities of an expanded economy and other factors demand that we broaden and update our offerings at the secondary and postsecondary levels" (Nemesh and Nemesh 1987).

3. Professional update - . . . "participant during the summer in an intership or temporary employment" situation (Nemesh and Nemesh 1987). This will update your skills and familiarize yourself with current business thoughts, trends and procedures.

4. Solicit the business community for monetary and equipment contributions to your program. This provides another source of obtaining . . . "funds to keep vocational education programs current with changing technology" (Stonehouse 1987).

5. Develop pamphlets, posters or brochures that promote your class and (or) program. "Effective" . . . "communications are usually simple, well focused, visually attractive, targeted (like newspapers) towards a sixth-eighth grade reading level, informative, entertaining and accurate. They also use the active voice and direct language, and are consistent in style, format and scheduling. The quality of all communications reflects . . . the personality of the organization" (Sharpe and Harville 1987).

6. "Build" . . . a "network and tap into it. Subscribe to publications in your field; develop relationships with key community leaders and organizations" (Chamber of Commerce). "Attend conferences and workshops with the goal of discussing vocational education with parents, social services agencies and business people" (Shields 1989).

7. Establish an advisory board and student organizations. . . . "Curriculum is essential, but other aspects must also be considered in order to develop a quality program. These aspects include active advisory committees and student organizations and involvement in professional activities to help bring your program up to date. An advisory committee can be helpful for the following functions: reviewing the objectives of a course, reviewing instructional equipment, promoting the program to the public, recruiting students into the program, and providing speakers and field trip sites. Student organizations serve a multitude of purposes. They provide leadership skills that may otherwise not be obtained in the traditional classroom setting, social skills that students need to function personally and professionally and the opportunity to develop career interests through competitive events programs" (Clemmensen 1988).
8. Solicit guest speakers. "Your community is" . . . filled "with potential speakers, people from business and industry who can help bring your students a fresh look at career choices. Their first-hand knowledge of the workplace can stimulate and motivate students to think seriously about the job they's eventually like to do" (Pestel 1989). Be sure to promote the fact that your class is using guest speakers.

As your marketing education program image improves the message that should be circulating around your school is that marketing education is the program to be in.

"One of the key functions of education is as an instrument to provide 'necessary skills' and thereby reduce youth unemployment" (Wellington 1986). "We must encourage education that will prepare the students of the 1990's for the jobs of the 1990's and beyond. . . . Our schools should work with business and industry to develop programs that reflect the needs of the labor market, now and in the future. . . . Throughout life, we encounter a series of doors to be opened, behind which lie greater opportunity. I cannot open the doors. But I will make it my goal to see that every American holds the same passkey - available, worthwhile, and affordable education" (Bush 1989).

Each of us hold the passkey to the image and subsequent success of our programs in marketing education.

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